

## Board of Selectmen

# Town of Upton



# Massachusetts

### BOARD OF SELECTMEN

**Kenneth E. Picard, Chairman**

**James A. Brochu**

**Robert J. Fleming**

### TOWN MANAGER

**Blythe C. Robinson**

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Memo To: Board of Selectmen  
From: Blythe C. Robinson, Town Manager  
Date: January 18, 2013  
Re: Town Manager's Weekly Report

### Warrants:

- Payroll: \$ 65,999.23
- Expense Warrant: \$107,326.21

### For Your Information/Follow Up:

- You may recall that we had submitted Upton's name to the MMA for their first annual website award program. Unfortunately we didn't win in our population category – that went to the Town of Chatham. We are disappointed but still pleased with how our new site is working.
- The Governor has announced two budget initiatives that could have significant impact on the Town of Upton in the future. The first is a \$13 billion transportation investment plan for the Commonwealth. Included in the plan is an increase in Chapter 90 funding of \$100 million dollars, or 50% greater than this year. We received about \$320,000 this year, so if this was funded it would rise to about \$480,000. We like many communities have not been able to keep up with road repairs in our annual budgets to the extent we should and these funds would be quite helpful. Funding is proposed as part of the Governor's call for higher taxes.  
Secondly, the Governor is calling for changes to retiree health insurance benefits for state and municipal employees. Currently our retirees are eligible for health insurance for themselves and their spouse once they have met the minimum requirements for a pension (age 55 and 10 years of service). The Town pays 50% of this cost for life. The Governor is proposing that these levels be increased to age 60 and 20 years of service, for all but those employees very close to retirement. These changes would have an impact on our future obligations for this benefit, but it is hard to quantify until the details are worked out.
- The Town Hall project continues to keep us very busy. The committee met last week with the CPC to review the latest cost estimate after the completion of the design development phase of the design. The construction costs are up about 5% from what was proposed to Town Meeting in the spring. This is almost exclusively due to some additional structural work identified during the intensive investigation of the building this fall and design to address the issues raised. The CPC seemed comfortable that the project

budget was still on track, and we will meet again with them in March to give them another update. The Committee also met this week with the capital budget committee as they will provide input to Town Meeting on their opinion as part of the process. The meeting was well attended by capital budget, community preservation, the building committee and the architects/consultants. The Committee reviewed the building design and the latest cost estimates, and asked thoughtful questions about each. The meeting ended on a positive note, though no vote was taken by Capital Budget.

We also continue to think very carefully about the safety aspects of moving to Memorial School during the construction process to ensure we're doing everything possible to maintain school safety while we are there. We plan to attend the next MURSD School Committee meeting on January 28<sup>th</sup> to review our plans in more detail.

- I was notified this week that my professional organization (ICMA – International City/County Management Association) has accepted my application for the credentialed manager program. I am now designated as a Credentialed Manager Candidate, and in March 2014 when I have seven years of service in a Manager role I will be upgraded to full credentialed status. This designation will require me to annually undertake various professional development opportunities to ensure that I stay current in my field.
- We are still working through the changes to the payroll process, but it seems like we can finally see light at the end of the tunnel. The Treasurer's Office has finally gotten a warrant document from the payroll service that meets their requirements. They will test it for a couple of weeks side by side with the current method to ensure it is 100% accurate, after which we'll end the requirement that boards/departments submit a payroll voucher. The second part of this change is leave time being reported weekly on each employee's time sheets. We've worked through several of the bugs and the list of corrections is now fairly short. Once that can be verified we'll be ready to go live and put this project behind us.
- One of the benefits of being in the MIIA health insurance trust is that they provide a budget to the Town to spend on wellness programs for employees. As part of that they put on a cooking demonstration this week on healthy options for crock pot cooking. I was pleased that 15 employees came out and participated.
- Please join me in bidding farewell and best wishes to Deb LaRose! Deb has been with the Town almost 12 years as a Communications Officer and for most of us the daytime voice of the Police Department when you call or stop by. We wish her all the best in her retirement and are sorry to see her depart. Applications to fill the position are due by January 29<sup>th</sup>.
- On Wednesday I attended a quarterly meeting for Town Managers with the Director of CMRPC. CMRPC has been working to expand the services they offer to their member communities which includes an on line forum to share ideas and questions on various topics, taking on bidding out a number of services and commodities used by DPW's so that each Town is not doing this individually, and GIS services. We are exploring the GIS service option closely, as it may be a very cost effective way to implement some tools that would be very helpful to the Town.
- Thank you to all who have submitted their Annual Reports. We are diligently working on preparing the book to go to print, but there are still a few outstanding. Please submit those to Sandy using the new template, and contact her if you have any questions.